

*A Call to Christians to search themselves; Or,  
a Warning to England; taken from the Ruin  
of the Jewish Nation.*

BEING A 9.  
S E R M O N

DELIVERED AT

W A T F O R D,

In the County of *HERTFORD*,  
the 17th of *February*, 1748.

The *Day* appointed for a *Publick Fast*.

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By J A M E S F A L L. *L*

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Published at the *Request* of those who heard it.  
With some Additions.

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*Son of Man, I have made thee a Watchman unto the House  
of Israel: Therefore hear the Word of my Mouth, and  
give them Warning from me. Ezek. iii. 17.*

*Cry aloud, Spare not, &c. Isa. lviii. 1.*

*Shall not I visit for these Things? saith the Lord: And shall  
not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this? Jer. v. 9.*

*Except ye repent, ye shall likewise perish. Luke xiii. 5.*

*Now all these Things happened unto them, for Ensamples:  
And they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the  
Ends of the World are come. I Cor. x. 11.*

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L O N D O N:

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A Call to Christians to Love their Neighbour  
a Warning to England; taken from the Mouth  
of the Jewish Nation.

# BEING A SERMON

DELIVERED AT  
WATFORD  
In the County of HERTFORD,  
the 19th of February, 1777.  
The Day appointed for a Fast by the

BY J. A. M. S. F. A. L. D.  
Published at the Request of those who heard it.  
With some Additions.

Con of this I have made this a Wednesday  
of Peace: therefore when the Lord shall  
give them a warning from me, I will be  
Glad: I will be glad: I will be glad:  
shall not I be for ever? I will be  
not my heart be comforted on such a day  
except I have seen the Lord: I will be  
None of you shall be able to stand  
And you shall be as a man  
Faint of heart: I will be glad:

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T H E  
P R E F A C E.

**A**MONG the many Characters the Ministers of Christ sustain, that of a Watchman is one; it is therefore their Duty, not only to give the Time of the Night, but also to warn the People of present and approaching Danger; when I take a View of the crying Abominations, both of Principles, and Practices, that abound among us, as a Nation, and also of the Temper and Conduct of Professors; I cannot but fear a great deal of Danger, not only from our Enemies at home, and abroad, but from the immediate Hand of God; which, as it is already lifted up against us, so it will certainly, with a lesser, or greater Weight of Vengeance fall upon us, if there is not a Reformation of religious Principles, as well as of immoral Practices among us. For I believe, those Doctrines that in their Nature, and Tendency, trample under Foot the Son of God, and count the Blood of the Covenant, as an unholy Thing, and do Despise unto the Spirit of Grace; or, in other Words, which deny the Divinity, Satisfaction, and imputed Righteousness of Christ, the Necessity of the efficacious Influences of the divine Spirit, to regenerate and sanctify the Soul, and compleat in her, that Grace, and Holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. I believe, I say, that those Doctrines bid as fair for, or as much portend our national Ruin, as our most flagi-

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## The P R E F A C E.

tious and atrocious Crimes. *For did not Wrath and Ruin come upon the Jews to the uttermost, for their rejecting Christ, as the Messiah, as the divine Son of God, and the Saviour of his People? I have therefore, thought it my Duty, in Compliance with the Request of those to whom I minister, to bear this publick Testimony, against both the wicked Principles and Practices of this Land; hoping the Lord may make me an Instrument for reclaiming some; or that I might deliver myself, from the Charge of their Blood. For if the Watchman see the Sword come, and blow not the Trumpet, and the People be not warned; if the Sword come and take any Person from among them, he is taken away in his Iniquity, but his Blood will I require at the Watchman's Hand. Ezek. xxxiii. 6.*

*So far as I am able to form a Judgment of my own Heart, my highest Aim, in the Publication of this, is the Glory of God, the Welfare of the Nation, the temporal and eternal Good of Men. And if but one Soul hath Cause to bless God on this Account, it will afford me such a Tide of Joy, that I hope will bear me up, against the rapid Torrent of critical Sneer and Contempt.*

*As I have been favoured, I hope, with divine Assistance in the Composure of this, and have humbly implored divine Direction in the Disposal of it, and as it met with that Acceptance from the Pulpit, which encouraged me to make it Publick; I shall, with incessant Prayers for its Usefulness, leave it in the Hands of him, on whom not only the meanest of his Servants, but even a Paul, or an Apollos, must depend for Success.*

J. F.



## ZEPH. II. 1, 2.

*Gather yourselves together, yea, gather together, O Nation not desired:—  
Before the Decree bring forth, before the Day pass as the Chaff.*

**I**F we compare the Inscription of this Prophecy, with that of *Jeremiah*; we shall find, that this Prophet, as well as *Jeremiah*, was raised up in the Days of *Josiah*, King of *Judah*; who might mutually confirm each others Doctrines and Prophecies, and the more effectually reclaim *Judah*, or more clearly leave them without Excuse.

The general Scope of this Prophecy, 1<sup>st</sup>, is to excite *Judah* and *Jerusalem* to Repentance; in order to which, the Prophet threatens them with Captivity and Ruin, for their *Idolatrous Apostacy, Pride, Covetousness, Oppression, Security*, and other Sins of *all Kinds* amongst them; that so, if possible, *Judgments* might be averted, and their *Ruin* prevented.

2<sup>dly</sup>, To denounce Judgments and Destruction against the deadly, and avowed Enemies of the Church, viz. *Philistians, Moabites, Ammonites, Ethiopians*, and *Assyrians*, for their Sins, and particularly their proud and cruel Usage of God's People; that so the Church

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might

might be warned by their Woes, and comforted in God's Vengeance upon his Adversaries. 3dly, to support and comfort a *faithful* Remnant of the *Jews*, after their Enemies Destruction, and their deep Afflictions, with Promises of calling the *Gentiles*, returning their Captivity, restoring their Prosperity, and bestowing *Evangelical* Blessings upon them in Jesus Christ.

And the particular Design of this Chapter, is to exhort *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, to at least, a national Reformation, or Repentance, before the *Decree* bring forth, that they might be hid in the Day of the Lord's Anger: This is urged from the formidable exemplary Judgments, which God would execute upon foreign Nations, in *sight* of the *Jews*, for their Warning. *viz.* Upon 1st *Philistians*, ver. 4, to the 8th, 2dly, *Moab* and *Ammon*, ver. 8, to 12. 3dly, *Ethiopians*, ver. 12. 4thly, *Assyrians*, and *Nineveh*, the Metropolis thereof, ver. 13, 14, 15. By all which exemplary Judgments, the Prophet labours to prevent the Ruin of *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, and to stir them up to the Duty enjoined in our Text; which our Translation reads, *gather yourselves*, &c. but I shall prosecute the Words, as translated by some learned Men; which Translation is thought more pertinent to the Scope of the Prophet; however, it more fully answers my present Design, and is as follows; *Search yourselves, even search you, O Nation, not worthy to be beloved; before the Decree bring forth; Or, before he, i. e. God, brings forth the Decree,*  
and

*and you be as Chaff, that passeth away in a Day.*

This rendring of the Words, suggests to our Improvement, the following Things.

*First*, The Duty enjoined, *Search*.

*Secondly*, The Persons on whom it is more immediately incumbent, *Yourselves*.

*Thirdly*, Who are more particularly here designed, and they are the *Jews*: Who are described as a *Nation not worthy to be beloved, viz. of God*.

*Fourthly*, The Time limiting them ; and that is, before the *Decree bring forth* ; or, before the *Execution of the Judgments* threatened against them.

*Fifthly*, The Reason here mentioned, to enforce the Duty recommended ; and this is, lest they be as *Chaff that passeth away in a Day*.

We shall attend to each of these in their Order.

*First*, As to the Duty of *searching*, we have it also exhorted to, *Lam. iii. 40. Let us search and try our Ways, and turn again to the Lord*. The Word, as the *Learned* observe, signifies to search narrowly, as a Man would do for a *Piece of Gold* ; or a *precious Jewel*, in the *Midst of a Heap of Rubbish*. Such a *Searching* seems to be intended, in the *First Chapter* of this Prophecy, and *Verse the 12th*, where it is said ; *and it shall come to pass at that Time, I will search Jerusalem with Candles, and punish the Men that are settled upon their Lees ;*



*that say in their Heart, the Lord will not do Good, neither will he do Evil.*

Then, how will the *Sinners* in *Sion* tremble, and *Fearfulness* surprize the *Hypocrite* ! It is therefore the *Duty* of all *Ranks* and *Degrees* of *Men*, to *search*, in the *Sense* of our *Text*. *Kings* should *search* and see that they *Rule* in *Righteousness* ; and *Princes*, that they *decree Judgment* ; *Subjects* should *search*, and well observe, that they behave with all that *Duty*, *Loyalty* and *Affection* to *God*, and their *King*, as becomes those who are *indulged* with all that can make a *Free* and a *Happy* People, as those of this Nation are ; *Officers* should *search* and take Care that they are *Peace* ; and *Exactors*, that they are *Righteousness* ; and *Magistrates*, that they bear not the *Sword* in *vain* ; but that they are *Terrors* to *Evil-doers*, and a *Praise* to *them that do well* : Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. And that not only by their *Civil Authority*, but by their *pious* and *exemplary* Conduct ; *Parents* should *search*, and *religiously* observe that they *provoke* not their *Children* to *Wrath*, but *train* them up in the *Nurture* and *Admonition* of the *Lord* ; and *Children*, that they *honour* and *obey* their *Parents*, so far as the *Peace* of their *Consciences*, and the *Honour* of *God* are not *invaded*, for this is right. *Servants* are to *search* and look upon it as a *divine* *Mandate*, that they are to serve their *Masters*, not with *Eye-service*, as *Men-pleasers*, but as the *Servants of Christ*, *doing the Will* of *God from the Heart* ; and *Masters* should so  
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behave to their *Servants*, as those that *consider* they have a *Master* in *Heaven*; and that *there is no Respect of Persons with him*; who will not *wink* at the *Tyranny* of a *Master*, or *despise* the *Cause* of the *injured Vassal*, Eph. vi. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. And *Ministers* are, in the most *solemn* Manner, to search, and see that they take heed to themselves, and to their *Doctrine*, that they may as much as in them lies, both *save* themselves, and *them* that *hear them*; how much will it be their *Mercy*, if they can say, in their latest Moments, *Wherefore I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men*; for I have not *shunned* to declare unto you all the *Counsel of God*? What heed, therefore, should *Ministers* take to themselves, and to all the *Flock*, over the which the *Holy Ghost* hath made them *Overseers*, to feed the *Church of God*, which he hath purchased with his own *Blood*; and set before them such an *Example* of unblemished *Piety*, as may embolden them to say, *ye are Witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you*? 1 Tim. iv. 16. Acts xx. 26, 27, 28. 1 Thess. ii. 10. So *Churches*, in the most religious Manner, should search and examine their *Conduct*, towards their *Ministers*, and see whether they use all Means to recommend their *Ministers* to the Esteem of their *Families, Neighbourhood, Church and World*, in order to render them more subservient to the *Glory of God*, and the *Good of Souls*. *Churches* should take the ut-  
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most Heed of throwing *Discouragements* in the Way of their *Ministers*, not only by *withholding* more than is *meet*, but by *Slights* and *Neglects*, *private Reproaches*, or *publick Insults*. These Things must greatly weaken the Hands of Ministers, in the *Service of Christ, and Souls*; such a Conduct, is highly displeasing to God, and unbecoming the Christian Character; and very foreign from that Respect the Lord hath commanded, should be shewn to his *Ministers*. Let the *Elders that rule well*, be counted worthy of double Honour, especially they that labour in the Word and Doctrine. For the Scripture saith, *thou shalt not muzzle the Ox, that treadeth out the Corn: And the Labourer is worthy of his Reward. Against an Elder receive not an Accusation, but before two or three Witnesses*, 1 Tim. v. 17, 18, 19. Again, we beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works sake, and be at Peace among yourselves, 1 Theff. v. 12, 13. See also, Heb. xiii. 7, and 17. Thus it appears from the Word of God, to be the Duty of all Ranks and Degrees of Men, to search, and try their Ways, in order that they might see their Defects, and be humbled under the mighty Hand of God; who might justly suffer a *Spanish*, or *Popish* Search, or *Inquisition*; which is one of the Props Satan has lent the Pope to support his declining Kingdom; the Lord grant we may ever be free from it.



it. But in the mean Time, we are to erect an *Inquisition* over our *corrupt Hearts*, and *Lives*, and deal roughly with them ourselves, and suffer others to do so by them, as far as they are Enemies to the Glory of God, the Interest of a Redeemer, the Peace and Tranquillity of his Churches, the Joy, Comfort, and Prosperity of our own Souls, and the Souls of others. And let it be observed, that we are to search our *selves*, and not *others*, as our Text hints, which brings us to,

The *Second* Point we are to consider, namely, the Persons on whom this Duty is more immediately incumbent, *yourselves* ; but alas, how prone are we to search for the *Mote* in our *Neighbours Eye*, whilst we neglect the *Beam* in our *own* ! If we would deal *impartially* with ourselves, we should not find so much Time, or at least Occasion, to censure, try, judge, and condemn others. Let us therefore a little attend to ourselves ; and in order to assist our *Search*, we are not to judge ourselves by ourselves ; for our Hearts are *desperately* wicked and *deceitful* above all Things, and are prone not only to impose on ourselves, but will even *dare* to impose on God, by drawing nigh to him with the Mouth, and honouring him with the Lip, when the *Heart* is far from him. *Matt.* xv. 8. compared with *Isa.* xxix. 13. Nor are we to judge ourselves by the Voice of *natural* Conscience ; for this, whilst *unawakened*, will cry *Peace*, whilst it *walks* after its *own wicked Imaginations*, and till sudden Destruction comes  
upon

upon it; in this State it will make a *mock* at *Sin*, *sport* with *Death*, and *laugh* at distant Vengeance ! And like *Solomon's* Madman, throw about Firebrands, Arrows and Death, and say he is but in *Sport*; but *there is no Peace to the Wicked*, saith my God, Isa. lvii. 21. xlviii. 22. Nor are we to search, and judge ourselves, by the *Opinion* of the *World*; for the *World* are incompetent Judges of the Springs and Motives, Ends and Aims of those Actions, that in *Christ* are acceptable, and well-pleasing to God: They commonly *justify*, where they should *condemn*, and *condemn*, where they should *justify*. For the *natural Man* receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth, or discerneth all Things, that will demonstrate a *natural Man*; yet he, himself, as a *spiritual Man*, cannot be judged, or discerned aright, by any *natural Man*, 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15. Therefore our safest Way is, to *search*, *judge* and *compare* ourselves by the *Law* and *Gospel*. The *former*, as the *Rule* of our *Walk*, the *latter*, as the *Revelation* of our *only Hope*. And we should plead with God, for the sake of *Christ*, to assist us in this Work; that he would search our Hearts, and try our Reins, and lead us in the Way everlasting; lest we be found such, as our Text more particularly describes, a People or Nation, not worthy to be beloved. Which brings us to,

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The *Third* general Head, namely, who are more particularly here designed; and they are the *Jews*; who are called a Nation not worthy to be beloved: God had blessed them above all other Nations; for to them pertained, *the Adoption, and the Glory, and the Covenant, and the giving of the Law, and the Service of God, and the Promises; whose are the Fathers, and of whom, as concerning the Flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.* Rom. ix. 4, 5. The *Jews* were the visible People of God; to them were committed the *Oracles* of God; but he dealt not so with other Nations, neither had the *Heathen* Knowledge of his Laws. Besides all this, they had a better *Land* than others about them; it flowed with *Milk* and *Honey*, that is, with all *Plenty* and *Delights*; and though their Country was but little, yet they themselves were so populous, and powerful, that whilst they pleased God, no Enemy durst encounter them, or at least was victorious over them. Thus were they a People beloved of God, above all others, at least in a *providential*, and *typical* Way. But how did this People requite this *Love*, which they had no more deserved than other Nations? *Certainly*, as they deserved it not, before they had it, so they ill requited it, when they had it; for they requited this *Love*, with *Hatred*, this *Kindness*, with *Ingratitude*, *Disobedience*, and *Rebellion*; they proved a most stubborn, and stiff-necked People, a froward Generation. *Moses* found this by his own Experience, and



saw it by a Spirit of Prophecy, and therefore cries out ; *do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish People, and unwise ?* For their ungratefulness and unkindness were such, as they were not only careless in performing such Duties as God required, but even multiplied their Sins, and those Rebellions which his Soul hated ; which was the more aggravating, as they were a People so *signally* favoured of God. I doubt not, but we may be ready to think the *Jews* are a People worthily cast off by God, and and utterly unworthy of his *providential Favour* and *Care*, and much more unworthy of his *distinguishing Love* in Christ ; they having so much abused his *Goodness* and *Mercy* towards them as a *Church*, and *Nation*. But let us bring the *Case* of this *People*, home to our *selves*, and we shall find, upon an impartial Enquiry, that *Israel* is not the only *Nation*, or *People*, unworthy of Love ; but it may be said, with equal Reason, that *England* is a Nation not worthy to be beloved ; for God hath been as *signally* good to *us*, as he was to *them* ; and we have been as *ungrateful* a *People* to God, as the *Jews* were : Which will appear, if we consider the following Things. *First*, the same Mercies, if not greater, have been *poured* down, and heaped upon us ; for God hath called us, out of first *Pagan*, and then *Popish* Darkness ; we are blessed with the Treasures of his Word and Ordinances ; the *blessed Gospel* was never better *preached*, and the *Mysteries* of it, better explained, (at least by

by some) since the Time of the Apostles : here I beg leave to express my Thankfulness, for all the *faithful* Labours of Christ's Ministers, of *every Denomination* ; but *particularly* for that *excellent, and elaborate Exposition*, of the *New Testament*, now *publishing* \* ; which *Work*, as a *Means* to *promote that Knowledge*, which is the *Evidence* of our *Interest*, in *eternal Life* ; and whereby we are made *wise to Salvation*, cannot (I think) be valued, *equal* to its *Worth*. This is one of those *signal Favours*, amongst the rest, that *England* is indulged with. We have also free Liberty, to *print, buy and read* such Books ; for, we have not only the *Protestant Religion*, but we have it under a *Protestant Prince* ; we are not obliged to seek the *Bread* of our *Souls*, at the *Peril* of our *Lives*, as our *Forefathers* have done ; but we have our Religion and Liberty countenanced by Authority, under a *King* who is a *Barrier* against *Popish Idolatry*, and *Arbitrary Power* ; a *Supporter and Maintainer* of the Churches of *England* and *Scotland* ; a *Guard* to the Liberty and Property of the Subjects ; a *Prince* who is so full of *Christian Moderation*, that he thinks no Indulgence too great for those who would worship God in *Spirit and in Truth*. Besides all this, we have a Land that flows with a *Plenty*, and *Variety*, of all good Things ; that even our *Plenty* with some, has been Matter of Com-

\* By that *Great and Learned* DIVINE, the Reverend Mr. *John Gill*.

plaint. But, how has *England* requited the Lord for *these Things*? *Certainly*, even with a Measure of *Unkindness*, equal to, if not more, and greater than *Israel* was guilty of. For our Sins as a *Nation*, are *grievous* and *capital*, and which is still worse, *wilful* and *affected*; even as though God had deserved *Evil* of us, and that therefore we ought *maliciously* to *requite him*.

But, that our Charge against *England* may not seem too severe, we will point out some of those Sins, by which she wickedly requites the Lord. And first, I may say *Ignorance* of God's *Word* and *Worship*. I speak not of that Ignorance, that is unavoidable, through the *Depravity* of our *Nature*; upon which Account, we are not only dark, but *Darkness*, till we are made *Light* in the Lord, *Eph. v. 8*. Nor do I speak of that compelled Ignorance in many Corners of our *Land*, which is to be pitied, because they want the *Means* of *spiritual* Knowledge; but of *wilful*, and *affected* Ignorance. Men are ignorant, even because they will be ignorant; either through *Covetousness*, whereby they will not *support*, or procure to themselves, the Means of spiritual Knowledge; or, through *Indolence*, in that they will not improve the Means, which are put into their *Hands*, or brought home to their *Doors*. Which if they did, it is the Way, not only to arrive at that Knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which they may escape the Pollutions of the World; but to be possessed of that Knowledge,



ledge, which is the Beginning, and Pledge of *eternal Life*. † But our Nation is dark and blind, in the *Sunshine* of the *Gospel*, and grossly ignorant, where the *Gospel* reaches their *Ears*, and its Light shines round about them. Who would look for such Ignorance, after such a *Sunshine* of the *Gospel*, since the *Reformation*? And yet, many are as ignorant, as though they had been born, and brought up under *Popery*. Nor is this *Ignorance* to be confined only to the natural World; for of some Professors, it may be said, *When for the Time ye ought to be Teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first Principles of the Oracles of God; and are become such as have need of Milk, and not of strong Meat*, Heb. v. 12. Nor yet, to the *Laity* only, for there are as many blind Leaders of the Blind, in our Day of *Gospel* Light, as there were in the Days of Christ; and what he says of those Days, is applicable to ours, *Light is come into the World, and Men love Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil*, John iii. 19.

Another great Sin of *England*, is *Contempt* of *true Religion*; true Religion hath a long Time been amongst us, but the longer it is continued, and the more it is *published*, the more it is *contemned* and *reproached* of many; infomuch, that the *simplest* Fellow in a *Country Town*, will *sneer* at true *Piety*, and *mock*, and *scorn* those who are *more religious than himself*; this is one of the *Moths* of *England*,  
that

† John xvii. 3.

that eats up *Religion*, and is *wicked* in whomsoever, but most intolerable, in two Sorts of Men. First, in them who are altogether ignorant, who mock they know not what, being not able to give the Meaning of one Petition, of that *Platform* of Prayer, which they call the Lord's Prayer; though neither our *Lord*, or his *Disciples*, ever *prayed it syllabically*, that we know of. Yet it is *frequently* and *formally* enough *babbled* over by *those*, who mock at *them* who *pray with the Spirit and the Understanding also*, and *worship God in Spirit and in Truth*. This *mocking*, and *sneering at Religion* is still worse, in those who are Men of Understanding, and live civilly, and would be counted good Christians, yet cannot abide to see others go a little before them, without branding them for Hypocrites and Dissemblers. Thus, even *Religion* itself, is a *By-word*, a *Mocking-stock*, and *Matter of Reproach*. So that in *England*, at this Day, the Man or Woman that begins to profess true Religion, must resolve with themselves to sustain Mocks and Injuries, even as though they lived among the *Enemies* of Christ, and not among those who profess, or at least, pretend to profess his *Religion* and *Name*. O what a *Cursed* and God-provoking Sin is this! What can God give to be regarded, when his Gospel and Religion are contemned? This Sin was not amongst the *Jews*, at least to that Degree, as it is in *England*. The *Jews* did not regard their Religion as they ought; but who did ever make a Mock  
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and Scorn of that Religion they professed, but *England*? O *England*, how canst thou answer this? God sends the most precious Jewel, that he can send to a Nation, and thou scornest it, and them that bring it, and them that receive it; even as though it were no Blessing, but a Curse: So that as Christ said to the *Jews*, *for which of my good Works do ye stone me?* He may say to *England*, I have given thee a fruitful Land, the great Blessing of a Protestant Prince, Gold and Silver, Honour and Happiness, Liberty and Property; for which of these, O *England*, dost thou despise my Gospel, and contemn my Religion? The least of these temporal Favours deserve Love and Thankfulness; but *England* hath a better than all these, to-wit, the everlasting Gospel and Word of Salvation; but this is contemned, as though it was of no Worth, and those that truly profess it, and those that bring it, and consequently God himself that gave it. Now if *England* had no more Sins than this, *this deserves*, that it should be said of us, that we are a Nation unworthy to be beloved, above all other Nations: For some People would have Religion, that they might love it, but they cannot have it; some have it, and love it not; but in no Nation is it made a Mocking-stock, but in *England*. And where are those Men but in *England*, who like the Dog in the Manger, will neither entertain Religion themselves, nor suffer them that would? Let every one take heed of this Sin, as a Sin that crieth to God, to revenge so vile



a Dishonour done to his divine Majesty. Neither is there any Sin, that more forcibly and certainly *foreshews* and *hastens* the Removal of the Gospel from us : For high Time it is to leave loving where Love procures *Disdain* ; and stay giving, where *Gifts* are *scorned*.

But perhaps it may be said, how does it appear that *England* despises the Gospel? I answer, that Ministers of all Denominations have free Liberty to preach it is certain ; and some are *well paid* for sustaining the Character of Gospel Ministers, who do not *preach* the Gospel. And it is to be feared the Generality of Ministers *do not preach the Gospel !* but *preach against it*, and *strive to root it out* (was it possible) from this Nation. Which is evident, by their preferring their *Reason*, though depraved, to *divine Faith* ; *natural Religion*, to that which is *revealed* ; a little *Civility*, *Courtesy*, and *Humanity*, to *Evangelical Obedience* ; and their pretended *Sincerity* and *Repentance*, to Christ's *Sacrifice* and *Righteousness* ; *moral Ethicks*, nay, *Play-Books*, to the *sacred Oracles* ; and *Plato*, and *Epietetus*, &c. to the *Apostles* of Jesus. Now, if for the Preaching of the Gospel, Ministers were exposed to the *Spoil* of their *Goods*, the *Imprisonment* of their *Persons*, and the *Loss* of their *Lives* ; then, their not Preaching of it, would seem more excusable, tho' they ought to preach it, at the Hazard and Expence of their Lives. But seeing they have free Liberty to preach the Gospel, and do not, but preach *against* it, although it is the Doctrine of  
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of the *Reformation*, and of the *Articles* and *Homilies* of the *Church of England*, as well as of the *Bible*. And as this Conduct of theirs, is agreeable to the general Taste of their Hearers; it is a plain Proof that the Gospel by *England* is despised. Again, if we take a Prospect of those Places, where the Gospel is *faithfully* preached, we may generally observe their Encouragement is *small*, and their Attendants are comparatively *few*; and too many of those *few*, accounting the Gospel as *light Bread*, looking upon it as their *Burden*, instead of their *Duty*, *Privilege* and *Honour*, to support it, and *transmit* it to *Posterity*. These *earthly-minded Wretches*, are like the foolish *Gadarenes*, who for the sake of their Swine, or Animal Enjoyments, are as it were, beseeching Christ, in his Ministers, Word and Ordinances, to depart from their Coasts. This is too plain and obvious to be disputed; which proves, that by *England* the Gospel is despised; and that we are a Nation not worthy to be beloved. But, this is not all, which renders *England* unworthy of Love. For all manner of Oppression, Cruelty, and Injustice, is predominant amongst all Ranks, and Degrees of Men; that we may easily see now, what *Solomon* saw in his Day, namely, *In the Place of Judgment, Wickedness, and in the Place of Righteousness, Iniquity*, Eccles. iii. 16. And the Oppression of the poor and violent perverting of Judgment and Justice, Eccles. v. 8. In short, the Time is come, when a truly godly Man may say with

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the Prophet *Micah*, Chap. vii. the First, and following Verses. *Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer Fruits, as the Grape Gleanings of the Vintage: There is no Cluster to eat: The good Man is perished out of the Earth: And there is none Upright among Men, &c.* But it is the good Man's Mercy that he hath the same Retreat the Prophet had, which is mentioned in the 7th Verse. *Therefore I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my Salvation: My God will bear me.* Now, as what is said in this Chapter, shews that the *Jews* were a *Nation*, unworthy of Love; this being so much our own Case, proves that *England* is also unworthy to be beloved. And here I would remark, The *Torrent* of our national Iniquity, runs chiefly, if not altogether, amongst those, who boast the Purity of Nature, the Power and Freedom of their Wills, as *natural*, to that which is *spiritually* good; the Strength of their Reason, and Sagacity of their Wisdom, in *spiritual* and *divine* Things; or in Scripture Language, who are *wise*, and *pure*, in their own *Eyes*, and *prudent* in their own *Sight*, and are rich, and increased in Goods, and lack nothing. In these are verified the Words of the wise Man, *Prov. xxx. 12, 13.* *There is a Generation that are pure in their own Eyes, and yet is not washed from their Filthiness. There is a Generation, O how lofty are their Eyes! And their Eye-lids are lifted up.* And on the other Hand, that little true *Piety* there is in the *World*, or in  
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this *Nation*, is to be found amongst those, who in a *spiritual Sense* apprehend themselves poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked; who make their Boast in the Lord Jesus Christ, and glory in him, as *made of God unto them, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; and count all Things but Loss and Dung, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of him; to these, his Person is all Desires, his Blood all Preciousness, his Righteousness all Glory. The Love of Christ, constrains these, to live to him, who died for them; who gave himself for them, to redeem them from all Iniquity, and purify them unto himself, as a peculiar People; whom he will make zealous of good Works. These, indeed, do good Works, whilst others only talk of them; these, under divine Influences, receive the Doctrines of the Grace of God, in the Love of them; which effectually teaches them, to deny ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil World.

Now, when I consider the different Tempers, and Grounds of Boasting; of those who boast in themselves, and of them, that boast in the Lord; I cannot but think, the Words of the wise Man, are applicable to them both. *There is that maketh himself Rich, yet hath nothing: There is that maketh himself Poor, yet hath great Riches*, Prov. xiii. 7. But I must return, to lay more to the Charge of this *sinful Nation*, this People laden with Iniquity, and Seed of Evil-doers; how does Swearing, false

Swearing, and Abuse of all the *Names* and *Titles* of God, belong to us! This Sin is general, even over the whole Land, in *Shops*, *Markets*, *Fairs*, &c. Where Men for a little Gain, will call the God of Truth to witness to a Lye; and the holy, just, righteous, and faithful God, to witness a Falshood; and what is still worse, if it can be so, God's holy and dreadful Name is blasphemed, and prophaned by wicked *Oaths*, in ordinary Talk, or Conversation, when there is not the least Provocation to swear at all; so that it is most awful to observe, that the Name of any Person of Figure, or what is called Honour, is used more reverently, and less abused, than that *fearful* and *glorious* Name, the *Lord* our *God*; who hath said, *he will not hold them guiltless, that take his Name in vain.* That is to say, he will severely punish them, in Time or to all Eternity.

Another *capital* Sin of *England* is, *Prophanation* of the Lord's Day. How many Thousands amongst us, are doing their own Work, finding their own Pleasure, and speaking their own Words; as though they had never heard of such a Precept, as remember to keep Holy the Sabbath Day; or as though they thought the holy God, was in jest, when he gave that eternal Rule of Righteousness, his Law, by which he will judge the World. But notwithstanding all the Threatnings in the Word of God, against Sabbath-Breakers, and all the Encouragements given in the same Word, to those

those who pay a religious Regard to the Sabbath ; yet, we see Places of Worship, where the true God is worshipped in *Spirit* and in *Truth*, almost *empty*, but Houses of Entertainment filled ; the religious Work of the Day, neglected ; and the Park, the Fields, Visits, Diversions, and Journeys, consume the *sacred Time*. How many are there, who, on the *Lord's Day*, make their *Beds* their *Sanctuaries*, their Dressing-Room their *Chapel*, their Looking-Glass their *Bible*, their Cook their *Chaplain*, and their *Belly* their *God* ! *Which Conduct*, must greatly displease and provoke God, for it opens a Gap, for a *Flood* of Iniquity ; which, without preventing Grace, will, by the *Rapidity* of its *Torrent*, carry Crouds of Souls, into the *infernal Lake*. But however considerable those are, that encourage the Prophanation of the Sabbath, by their *Practice* or *Authority* ; they are surely so far Enemies to God, *Grievors* of good Men, and *Destroyers* of the *Credit* of the Religion of *Jesus* ! which brings to my Mind what I have read, was said by *Bishop Usher*, concerning Doctor *White*, then *Bishop* of *Ely*, who wrote against the *Morality* of the *Christian Sabbath* ; at which *Bishop Usher* was so exceedingly shocked, that clapping his Hand upon his Breast, he immediately recited, the Words of *Jeremiah*, to *Hananiah*. *Thus saith the Lord, this Year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught Rebellion against the Lord*, Jer. xxviii. 16. But to return ; the Sabbath is not prophaned only by following our secular Employments,



ploys, or taking our Pleasure, or absenting  
 ourselves from the Worship of God, without  
 a *just Cause* ; but 'tis prophaned when we are  
 not careful before-hand, to prevent and avoid  
 all such Business, as may distract us in those  
 Duties that belong to this Day ; and when we  
 rest in a superstitious, customary Observation  
 of it ; and when we are not mindful to pray  
 for *Ministers* in *general*, that God would en-  
 dow them with every needful Supply, for the  
 Discharge of their *important Work*, and give  
 the greatest Success to their publick Minis-  
 trations ; more particularly, for the *Pastor*, to  
 whose *Charge* we belong, that God may help  
 him to speak the *Truth*, as it is in *Jesus* ; make  
 him a *Scribe*, well instructed for the Kingdom  
 of Heaven, and a right Divider of the Word  
 of Truth ; and that he may give to every one  
 their Portion of Meat in due Season. I doubt  
 not, but we *prophane* the Sabbath, when we  
 are careless in the performing of our publick  
 Duties, not with so much *Reverence*, *Sincerity*,  
*Spiritualness*, and *Attention*, as we should ; and  
 when we are negligent in looking to those that  
 are under us, who by our Carelessness, or Con-  
 nivance, may be encouraged to the Prophane-  
 ment of this Day ; and when we fail in those private  
 Duties, that concern the Sanctification of the  
 Sabbath ; to-wit, Meditation of the Word we  
 have heard, searching the Scriptures, to prove  
 the Truth of it, endeavouring by *divine Aids*,  
 to improve it to the Glory of God, the good  
 of our own Souls, and the Souls of others,  
 by

by Prayer and Conference, mutually exhorting and stirring up each other unto Love, and good Works. The Sabbath is also prophaned, when we are weary of it, and wish it were gone, and cannot call it a Delight. Which was the Case of those we read of, *Amos viii. 5*, and *Isa. lviii. 13*. And which is too much the Case of *England*, although the keeping of the Sabbath is of divine Institution, and is designed of God, as a Means, to promote Holiness, and is a great Expedient, under God, to recover and strengthen those Things in Religion, which seem ready to die; and which *Day* we have Reason to believe, hath been the Birth-Day of Millions, to a *spiritual* and *eternal Life*; wherein poor Souls have been made, under *divine Influences*, to rest from a Dependence upon their own Works, from a Love to, and Practice of their Sins, and to rest upon a crucified, risen, and exalted Saviour, the *only*, and *true Rest* and *Center* of *weary* and *heavy-laden Souls*. Now seeing the Sabbath, which is of *divine Institution*, and is designed for such excellent Ends, as the Glory of God, and the *spiritual*, and *eternal Good* of Men, is so much *neglected* and *polluted*, both by *Professor* and *Profane*, in *this Nation*; it shews that we are a *Nation* not desired, or worthy to be *beloved*. I might heap up more Proofs of our Unworthiness, and Ripeness for Ruin; namely, those Murders, Adulteries, Robberies, Extortions, and the like: I might also mention, that *sedition* Spirit there is still in the Nation, notwithstanding  
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our late remarkable Deliverance from the Jaws of *Popery, Slavery, and Ruin*. I might, Lastly, add, that Spirit of Giddiness, Error, Confusion, Disorder, Lukewarmness, Division and Contention, that prevails amongst the Churches. All which proves the Point in Hand, that *England* is a Nation *unworthy* to be *beloved*; and portends what this Prophet speaks of, Chap. i. 15. *A Day of Wrath, a Day of Troubles and Distress, a Day of Wastefulness and Desolation, a Day of Darkness and Gloominess, a Day of Clouds and thick Darkness*. But it is now Time to open a *Door of Hope*, in this *Valley of Achor*, which seems to be pointed out to us in our Text, by this limiting Clause, *before the Decree bring forth*: Which leads us to,

The *Fourth* general Head; and which is as though the Prophet had said, *Israel*, O that thou mightest be reformed; and that, both in thy *Principles* and *Practices*, before God execute his *Judgments* upon thee. The Prophet seems here, to compare the Lord to a *pregnant Woman*; for as she conceives the Fruit in her Womb, and bears it a long Time before she brings it forth; so the Lord, when a People sins, conceiveth, that is, ordains a Judgment for it; but he keeps it up, and all that while bears it; but as *she*, when her Time is come, doth travail and bring forth; so when the Time that God hath appointed is come, and there is no Reformation, but Sin is persisted in; then his *Justice* travails to be delivered  
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of that Judgment, which *Mercy* hath kept off so long a Time ! Thus the old World had an hundred and twenty Years Warning given them, for a Time of Repentance ; all that while God, speaking after the Manner of Men, was a conceiving ; at last, when their Sins were ripe, and no Hope of Amendment, then God travailed and brought forth a fearful Birth, namely the universal Deluge, to wash them away, and take Vengeance upon the universal Iniquity of a sinful World. So many hundred Years he gave the *Jews* ; so long he was conceiving their Ruin, and often brought it as it were to Birth, as in the Captivity of *Babylon*, and under *Antiochus* \* ; yet his Mercy staid it, and still he travailed longer, but at last, when *Israel's* Sins were ripe, and there was no Remedy, but they grew worse and worse, as in the Time of Christ, then he would contain no longer ; but travailed indeed, and hath brought forth a fearful Birth, even an utter Desolation of that Kingdom, and Country, of their City, and Temple, and a *Dispersion* of *themselves*, over all the World. Again, as a Woman brings forth with Sorrow and Pain, so the Lord,

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\* It is said, when *Antiochus* besieged *Jerusalem*, which was about 168 Years before Christ, that he slew 80000 *Jews*, took 40000 of them Prisoners, and sold as many for Slaves ; that he prophaned the Temple, set the Statue of *Jupiter Olympius* upon the Altar, sacrificed to him, and carried away all the holy Vessels ; and at his Return to *Antioch*, he cut off the Seven *Macchabees*, and all the *Jews* in his Dominions, who would not abjure their Religion. *Le Clerk's Dictionary on the Word Antiochus.*

speaking after the Manner of Men, brings forth *Judgments* with *Grief*, and as it were *Unwillingness*; for he does not *willingly afflict*, or *grieve* any of the *Children of Men*; he often touched the *Jews* a *little*, and as unwilling to smite them, he as often pulled back his Hand again, but at last, when their Sins did so increase, that they even did *wring* out by *Violence* his *Plagues* from him, then with much Concern for them, shewn by the *Humanity* of Christ, in weeping over their City, he executed his *Judgments* upon them. But as they are long a coming, so when they come forth, they are the heavier; as a Child, the more Fullness of Time it hath, is the greater, the livelier, and the stronger; so God's *Judgments*, the longer he deferreth them, the heavier they come, as is evident in the *Jews*, once his own *professing* People; for he hath not only destroyed their *Church*, and *Nation*, but hath smitten their Posterity with Blindness of Mind; so that to this Day, when the Scripture is read, the *Vail* of Ignorance and Unbelief, concerning the Person, Offices, and Grace of Christ, the Prophecies of the Old Testament, the Nature, Use, and End of their Laws, Moral and Ceremonial, their own wretched Estate, and Condition, as the Descendants of *Adam* continues; and they still plod on, in this *fearful* and palpable Darknes. Thus it has happened to the *Jews*, but it is for our *Ensample*, and *Warning*, for *except we repent, we shall likewise perish*. How happy is it for *England*, that

that the *Decree* is not come forth; or that *Judgment* is not fully executed against us. As for the miserable *Jews*, it is come on them already: To these poor Souls it can be said no more, *search, and return, before the Decree comes forth*, for it is now past: Happy will it be for us in *England*, if this Word, *before it comes forth*, hath its proper Influence upon us. For let us consider that God is the same, as *just* and *jealous* as ever he was, and our Sins are as *vile*, and, if possible, *viler* than the *Jews* were; how can it be then, but that, or if possible, something worse, must fall on us, than that which fell on them.

The *Glory* of God, and your *temporal* and *eternal Safety*, permit me not to flatter you; but should I be accounted your Enemy, I must tell you the Truth. Though I pretend to say nothing in Way of Prophecy; yet without a Reformation in *Principles*, as well as in *Practices* amongst us, some *fearful Scourge*, if not, to say, *Plague*, will light upon us. What confirms me in this *awful Thought*, is not only the universal Corruption, and Immorality, that is amongst us, but the *general Neglect*, and Contempt of the Gospel. *For how shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation?* Heb. ii. 3. And when Men go on *mocking the Messengers and Ministers of Christ*, *Wrath* will come upon them to the *uttermost*, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. My Fears are still more confirmed when I consider the spreading *Infection* of *Deism*, *Arianism*, *Sabellianism*, *Socinianism*, *Pelagianism*,



*nism, Arminianism, Enthusiasm, &c.* all of which, in *my Opinion*, are less or more, God dishonouring, Grace eclipsing, Christ debasing, Creature-exalting, Soul-deceiving, Soul-ruining Doctrines. What further increases my *Dread*, is, that when *Judgment, mixed with Mercy*, works little or no Reformation, in the *Nation*, or *Churches*, it is generally, if not always attended with heavier Strokes. The Conduct of God, in the Course of his Providence, in every Age of the World, is a Proof of this.

Now, we have been a long Time exercised with a *bloody* and expensive War; and an infectious, or pestilential Disease, is sent among our Horned Cattle; and a general Complaint, amongst Farmers and Tradesmen; the *Swords* of *unnatural Rebels*, have been *drawn* in the *Heart* of this Kingdom, and we expected they would soon be *sheathed* in our own *Bowels*, or that we must behold the *rusty Blade*, of a *cruel Russian*, reeking from the *Heart* of a *Father, Child, or Brother*.

But God was pleased to appear for us, and give the *Rebels* an Overthrow, equal to their *desperate, presumptuous, cruel, and villainous* Enterprize. But what *Influence* has this *gracious Deliverance* had upon the Principles and Morals of the Nation, or of the Churches? if we take a Prospect of the Nation, we shall have reason to say, that though Mercy hath been shewn us, and Judgments are abroad amongst us; yet, the Inhabitants of the Land do not learn *moral* Righteousness thereby.

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And if we take a Survey of the Churches, we shall have too much Reason, or Cause to fear that Judgment shall begin at the House of God; especially, if we form a Judgment from the Principles, Temper, and Conduct, of some *Communities* and *Professors*: But I hope this is not generally the State of the Churches, and Professors of the *Name* of *Jesus*; but that they are more conscious of the Dignity of their high and heavenly Calling; more tenacious of the Glory of God, and the Reputation of Religion; and more duly consider, that they are called not only to *Glory*, but *Virtue*, and to *that Peace*, and *Holiness*, without which, *none* shall see the Lord. Once more, to shew that my Fears of some heavy Judgments befalling us, as a Nation, are not irrational; it stands with the Justice of God, as revealed in his Word, especially in *Jer. v. 9*, and *Deut. 28*. throughout the whole Chapter. From whence we may gather, that where there is a general Neglect and Contempt of God's Law, Word, Worship, and Gospel, especially, by a People that has been brought nigh to, and highly favoured of God, as the *Jewish Nation* hath been, and *England* is; that People may expect to be the Theatre of Divine Vengeance; and the Lord may justly say to *England*, as he did to *Israel*; *you only have I known, of all the Families of the Earth; therefore I will punish you, for all your Iniquities*, Amos iii. 2. O then, that we may *search* and *try* our Ways, and turn again unto the Lord; that when he  
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takes his *Fan* in his Hand, *thoroughly* to purge his *Floor*, we may not be *as Chaff*, that *passeth in a Day*; that is quickly, in a very short Time. Which leads us to,

The *Last* general Head, which is the Reason here mentioned, to enforce the Duty enjoined, or recommended. *And you be as Chaff*, &c. Here the Prophet seems to compare the Lord to an *Husbandman*; his professing People to *Corn*, *Isa. xxi. 10.* True Believers amongst them, to *Wheat*; and the Ungodly to *Chaff*. Now as a wise Husbandman letteth his Wheat and Chaff lie together no longer than till the the proper Time of Winnowing; so God, the great and wise Husbandman, hath appointed his fanning Times, when to separate the *Chaff* from the *Wheat*. Which is done first, by his Word preached: For when the Gospel is preached to a Nation, or Congregation, it *fans* and tries them, that there is a visible Difference between the Godly and Ungodly; at least to a spiritual Discerning, in a Judgment of Charity. The Word seems to be compared to a Fan, *Matt. iii. 12.* Where it is said, speaking of Christ; *whose Fan is in his Hand, and he will thoroughly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner: But he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire.* The Wind of this Fan of the Word preached, sometimes, blows so strongly upon the Wicked, that it even brings them to the *Verge of Hell* in this World; for it strikes their Conscience with such Fear and Torment in Life, or at Death, which is to  
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some as the Prelibations of Hell, and the Flashes of eternal Fire. This has been the Case of some of God's *own People*, in their own Apprehensions. But this is not properly the Effect of the *Gospel*, which speaks nothing but Peace, Pardon and Salvation, to sensible Sinners. But it is the Voice of the Law, in the awakened Conscience. For all that spiritual Thunder, and Lightning, Blackness, Darkness and Tempest, that the *Consciences* of Men are alarmed with, come not from Mount *Sion*, but from Mount *Sinai*, Heb. xii. 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. That is to say, 'Terror is not the Effect of *the Gospel*, which is a *joyful Sound*, but of the Law, which is a Ministration of *Death and Condemnation*.

But to return, God hath another Fan, by which he winnows the *Chaff* from the *Wheat*, which is his Judgment, which may rather be intended, by the Fan spoken of in *Matt. iii. 12*. And which also is meant, by the Fan, in *Jer. xv. 6, 7*. *Thou hast forsaken me, saith the Lord, thou art gone backward; therefore will I stretch out my Hand against thee, and destroy thee: I am weary with repenting. And I will fan them with a Fan in the Gates of the Land: I will bereave them of Children; I will destroy my People, since they return not from their Ways.* This is his *latter Fan*, when the *first* will not prevail; for *Mercy rejoiceth against Judgment*, and Judgment seems to be called his *strange Work*: This Fan is powerful, and strong, being driven about by the Wind of his Wrath;

Wrath; this Fan went over the *Old World*,  
 and *swept* them all away; and went over the  
*Nation* of the *Jews*; we see they are *no more*.  
 The Fan of God's Word indeed, separates  
 Men, in their spiritual Principles, Affections,  
 and Enjoyments; but the Fan of his *Judgments*  
 is more violent: For thereby he often severeth  
 them asunder in *Soul*, gathering the Souls of  
 his *Elect* into *Heaven*, and blows the Souls of  
 the Wicked into *Hell*. But yet the Bodies of  
 them may lie together, as *Companions* of the  
*same Grave*, and it may be, have *fell* by the  
*same Calamity*; subject to the same Corruption;  
 and *Death* in *Appearance*, hath the same Do-  
 minion over them both. But afterwards at the  
 last Day, or God's great winnowing Time, he  
 then will sever asunder, in Soul and Body, the  
*Wheat* from the *Chaff*, the *Sheep* from the  
*Goats*; so as not to be mingled again, for  
 ever, and ever; and then with the Wind of  
 his *Wrath*, he will blow the *Chaff* into un-  
 quenched Fire; and as the Fruit of his elect-  
 ing, redeeming, and sanctifying Love, gather  
 his Wheat into *everlasting, glorious, and hea-  
 venly* Garners. But it is the *Fan* of divine  
 Judgments in this Life, which the Prophet in  
 our Text points at; and which he is so solici-  
 tous, that the *Jews*, by their *national Repentance*  
 and *Reformation*, should avert. For though  
 there is no *Merit* in our most Evangelical  
 Repentance; yet, God has so far honoured,  
 even external, if not hypocritical Humiliation  
 and Repentance, as to suspend for a Time,  
 threatened





‘ untimely Death, discharged on our innocent,  
 ‘ and useful Animals? Are not these the *Wea-*  
 ‘ *pons* of *divine Displeasure*, and manifest  
 ‘ Chastisements of a sinful Generation? has  
 ‘ not God, the God to whom Vengeance be-  
 ‘ longeth, still a Controversy with our Land;  
 ‘ and who can tell where the Visitation will  
 ‘ end? What a Storm may follow these *prelu-*  
 ‘ *sive Drops*?’

Thus having pointed out our *imminent Danger* from the *Hand* of *God*; what now remains, but that I should suggest the *Way* for our *Escape*. And let it be observed, that as our manifold Sins and Transgressions, in *Principle*, as well as in *Practice*, have provoked God to lift up his Hand against us; so a Reformation in *both* of these, is the most likely *Way* for our *Escape*: For as *Sin* is a *Reproach* unto any *People*, so it is said, that *Righteousness exalts a Nation*, Prov. xiv. 34, compare with Chapter xi. 11. To press this, let me address myself to those, who are yet in a State of Nature, or *Unregeneracy*, who are wholly unfit to meet the Lord in the *Way* of his *Judgments*: It becomes you to plead with God, that you may be enabled to take the Advice of the *Prophet* here given; namely, to search and try yourselves, by the Law, Gospel, and Word of God; for it is a Contempt of these, that without *preventing Grace*, will bring *Ruin* upon you; as appears from Isa. v. 24. *Therefore as the Fire devoureth the Stubble, and the Flame consumeth the Chaff, so their Root shall be as Rot-*  
*tenness,*

*tenness, and their Blossom shall go up as the Dust: Because they have cast away the Law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the Word of the holy One of Israel.*

Now the Way to escape God's Judgments, is to *judge yourselves*, or to escape his *fearful fanning* and trying, is to *fan* and *try yourselves*; in order to which, you must solicit the Aids of the *divine Spirit*, without which, you can do nothing right; and for your Encouragement, God hath graciously promised his Spirit to them that *sincerely* and *rightly* ask it, *Matt. vii. 7, 8, &c.* Again, for your further Encouragement, whomsoever the *Fan* of the *Word* doth savingly work upon, these are never *blown to Hell*, with the Fan of God's most *vengeful Judgments*: O then, that the Word of God might *pierce*, and *try*, and *ransack* every one of your Hearts! who, are yet in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bonds of Iniquity; that you might see and bewail your wretched Estate; and flee for Mercy, Pardon and Grace, to the Lord Jesus Christ, who only can save you from the Wrath to come; and whose Name is as a *strong Tower*, *whither the Righteous run, and are safe*; and he that *cometh* to him, shall in no wise be *cast out*, *John vi. 37.* Now Souls, if *this* is your *happy Case*, when the Fan of God's Judgments blows the *Wicked* into *Hell*; it will either blow over you, as over *Lot* in the *Ruin of Sodom*; or by the Stroke of *Death*, *fan out* your *Corruptions*, and *blow* you up to *Heaven*, to be laid up there, as *pure Wheat* in the *Garners*, or *Mansions of Glory*.



Happy will it be for the *Inhabitants* of *England*, if they take Warning before the Decree come, or bring forth ! Or the Judgments that hang over our Heads, are fully executed upon us : It may be, we might avert impending Judgments, continue present Mercies, perpetuate the *Gospel* to *Posterity*, and preserve this *happy Nation* from being *destroyed*, or *depopulated* by some fearful Calamity.

*Lastly*, if those who are *wedded* to their *Lusts*, and the *World*, will, like the *deaf Adder*, still turn a *deaf Ear*, to the Voice of the Charmer, charm he never so wisely ; then I turn to *you*, that *fear* the Lord. *Search*, O *search* and try your *Hearts* and *Lives* ; plead with God to renew you more and more, in the Spirit of your *Minds*, and to strengthen your *Faith*, assist your *Hope*, increase your *Love*, and inflame your *Zeal* ; then if *Judgment* comes upon *this Nation*, and drives the *Gospel* from it, and the *impenitent Sinners* in it, to *Hell*, you will have a comfortable *Testimony* in your *Consciences*, that you did not pull down this general Calamity ; but for your *Parts*, have laboured to prevent it, by your wholesome *Instructions*, fervent *Prayers*, and pious *Examples*, and by a *Conversation* in your *Families*, *Neighbourhood*, *Church*, and *World* ; which gave *Demonstration* to all around you, that your righteous *Souls* were *vexed* with the *filthy Conversation* of the *Wicked*. This being the Case, *Posterity* will have *Cause*, not to *curse*, but bless you, speak reverently of you, and praise God



God for you ; for whose Sakes, deserved Judgments were prevented ; and their invaluable Mercies transmitted to them. Let us then, who have an Interest at the *Throne of Grace*, plead with the Lord, on the Behalf of *his Churches*, and *this Nation*, as *Abraham* did, on the Behalf of *Sodom* ; and though Judgments hang over our *Heads*, and our *Sins* justly deserve them ; and though the *Papists* and their *Friends* are gaping for our *Ruin* ; yet the Lord's Hand is not shortened that he cannot save, nor is his Ear heavy, that he cannot hear ; but he hath said, *call upon me in the Day of Trouble, I will deliver thee*, and thou shalt glorify me. Let us then, *ply* the Lord with our *Prayers* ; and, with *Moses* set ourselves in the *Breach* ; and pray for the *ignorant Multitude*, and mourn for the *Sins* of *those*, who do not *mourn* for their *own Sins* : So did *Noah*, *Daniel* and *Job* in their Ages, and prayed for the People in *general Calamities* : May we be, and do, as *these*, in our Generation ; and then we shall either turn away Judgments from our *Nation*, or at least *deliver* our own *Souls*. But as our *general Sinfulness* threatens some *heavy Judgments*, let us *plead* with God to give us, as a *Nation*, both *Grace*, and *Space* to repent ; and that we, *ourselves*, may be *practically* prepared to meet the Lord, in the *Way* of his *Judgments* ; that when he *whets* his *glittering Sword*, and his Hand takes hold on *Vengeance*, to make his *Arrows drunk* in the *Blood* of his *Enemies*, we may be counted *worthy in Christ*,

to escape those Things which must needs come upon lukewarm Professors, apostate Churches, sinful Nations, and a wicked World. As for those that shall despise this serious and seasonable Warning, let them beware, lest that come upon them, which is spoken of in the Prophets, \* Behold, ye Despisers, and wonder, and perish!

\* Acts xiii. 41. Hab. i. 5.

**E. I. N. I. S.**

